



Australian Statistics Advisory Council
Annual Report 2008 – 09



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AUSTRALIAN STATISTICS ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Senator the Hon Nick Sherry
Assistant Treasurer

I have pleasure in submitting the Annual Report of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council for the year ended 30 June 2009.

The Annual Report outlines the work undertaken by the Council and is submitted to you for presentation to Parliament under sub-section 24(2) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

The Annual Report is dated on the day I approved the text for printing.

Geoff Allen
Chairperson

2/ July 2009

Australian Statistics Advisory Council

Mission

To ensure that, in keeping with Council's statutory charter, the advice furnished to the Minister and the Statistician in relation to the collection and dissemination of statistics has due regard to relative priorities, is objective, relevant, timely, constructive and practical, and that it is sensitive to the needs of both suppliers and users of statistical data.



The Australian Statistics Advisory Council meeting in Canberra on 30 June 2009.

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Note: *After the first reference in this Report, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council is referred to as the Council or ASAC, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics is referred to as the ABS.*

Foreword

As set out in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, the role of Council is to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to:

- (a) the improvement, extension and coordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia
- (b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services, and
- (c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.

The 2008-09 year has been a busy one for ASAC.

In February 2009, I wrote to politicians and senior government officials reflecting my concerns about the collection and use of statistics by Australian governments. The Treasurer responded, acknowledging the suggestions to improve data collection processes across agencies at all levels of government, supporting the role of the National Statistical Service (NSS) and committing to the ABS' role in the wider statistical community.

During 2008-09, the Council advised on the ABS' official statistics program for the period 2009-10 to 2012-13. An extraordinary meeting of the Council was called in April 2009 to consult members on a number of options around further work program reductions if new appropriation was not received in the 2009 Federal Budget. This met the Statistician's commitment to consult more closely with the Council on work



The Chair of ASAC, Geoff Allen.

program changes. The discussion at this meeting was beneficial, with state government members representing a whole of government view, providing a balance between the viewpoints of both constituents and the organisation, and allowing a trading off of the concerns and priorities. I thank all participants for their contribution to the discussion.

The Budget outcome for the ABS was a positive one, with additional appropriation received. This will reduce the immediate pressure on the forward work program, and allow for the

reinstatement of most of the work program cuts made in 2008. Council members concerns over the budget pressures impeding progress have been allayed. However, concern is still expressed over the content of the 2011 Census remaining the same as for the 2006 Census, with the Census potentially losing its relevance over time if this is to continue beyond 2011. The Statistician has recognised this is the case and made a commitment that the content will change for the 2016 Census.

Council members continue to express concerns over the effect on official statistics of potential difficulties in recruiting and training professional statisticians. The ABS needs to be in a position to recruit appropriate numbers of university graduates to build capability for the future.

Along with other Council members, I am encouraged by the collaboration between the ABS and the COAG Reform Council on statistics. The combination of workshops, secondments, training and quality advice will enhance the quality of the COAG performance indicators over the longer-term.

I have been reflecting on the role of the Council over the last year, and at the most recent meeting there was a positive discussion around the role of ASAC in the future. I am indebted to members for their significant input to the discussion, and in determining the future of the Council.

In June 2008, the Cabinet reshuffle resulted in a new Minister for the ABS. I would like to thank the Hon Chris Bowen MP, for his support of the ABS throughout his time as Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs. I plan to meet with the new Assistant Treasurer, Senator the Hon Nick Sherry, shortly and look forward to continuing the constructive working relationship I have enjoyed with his predecessors. An invitation will be extended for the Minister to attend the next meeting of the Council in November 2009, and also the Council dinner. I will continue to brief the Minister after each meeting of Council.

The Council has seen a number of changes to its membership this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Fiona Stanley and Professor Tony Barnes, both of whom resigned from the Council in early 2009, for their contributions to the work of the Council. The work done by Council members to support the activities of ABS, including membership of other ABS advisory groups, is also appreciated.

I would like to convey my appreciation to Mr Pink and his team for their positive approach to working with the Council, and to the advice we have provided during the year. Thanks also goes to the ASAC Secretariat, without whose support the Council could not function in an effective manner.

I look forward to working with the Council and the Statistician, along with the new Assistant Treasurer, to continue the provision of an effective and responsive national statistical service for Australia.

This report will be available on the Council web site (www.asac.gov.au), which also contains information about the Council, including its functions and membership, together with meetings and agendas.

Geoff Allen
Chairperson

Chapter 1. Introduction



Chapter 1 Introduction

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

Under subsection 18(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, the Council is to advise the Minister and the Australian Statistician on:

- (a) the improvement, extension and co-ordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia
- (b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services, and
- (c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.

The Act enables the Minister or the Australian Statistician to seek the advice of Council on these matters. The Council also offers advice to the Minister or the Australian Statistician when it considers it appropriate to do so.

The Act provides that the Council shall consist of a part-time Chair, the Australian Statistician (ex officio), and between ten and twenty two part-time members, including one nominee from each State Premier or Territory Chief Minister. The Chair and members are appointed by the responsible Minister for periods of five years and up to three years respectively, and are eligible for reappointment. The membership of the Council as at 30 June 2009 is detailed at Appendix 1.

Subsection 24(2) of the Act provides that: *the Council shall, as soon as practicable after 30 June in each year, prepare and submit to the Minister, for presentation to the Parliament, a report relating to matters connected with the operation of this Act.*

Chapter 2. Summary of Activities for 2008-09



Chapter 2 Summary of Activities for 2008-09

The Council held three meetings during 2008-09:

25 November 2008

23 April 2009, and

30 June 2009.

Agendas for the meetings are provided at Appendix 2.

The Council considered a number of issues during 2008-09, including the following:

Forward work program

The Council's 2007-08 Annual Report outlined members' concerns that the ABS was not adequately resourced to deliver statistical information to support the new policies proposed by the Australian Government, including social inclusion and climate change, as well as the policy program arising from the revitalised COAG agenda and the 2020 Summit.

During 2008-09, the Council provided input into the review of the long-term funding of the ABS by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD) and the Treasury, set up to consider additional funding for the ABS. Members advised the Statistician, at an extraordinary meeting of Council, about the products that could be ceased or reduced in the event that the ABS received no, or insufficient, additional funding. Members also raised their concerns over the impact of any possible long-term reductions to the ABS work program, especially the longer-term effect on future Censuses of Population and Housing, if insufficient additional funding was received.

After the May 2009 Federal Budget, the Statistician informed Council members of the outcome from the DoFD review, which was that the ABS will receive an additional \$15 million in Government appropriation on an annual basis. The Statistician advised the Council that most of the work program cuts made in 2008-09, including the reduction in the Labour Force Survey sample, would be restored during 2009-10. Council members acknowledged the success of the ABS in securing the additional appropriation and welcomed the reinstatement of the majority of the work program that had been cut in 2008-09.

Members raised concerns over the possible additional impact on the ABS budget of the Gershon Review into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Australian Government's use and management of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This review aims to find additional efficiencies from the current ICT practices within individual Government departments or agencies, through the application of a range of best-practice initiatives and more consistent use of 'off-the-shelf' software in line with Government policy. The way the ABS has managed its ICT infrastructure over the last decade has resulted in the implementation of the majority of best-practice initiatives, causing difficulties in finding further efficiencies under the review. The ability of the ABS to find additional ICT efficiencies under the Review may create pressure on its financial position, and the possibility of further work program changes may be necessary.

Council members discussed concerns about the collection and use of statistics in Australian governments. Members noted an increase in the duplication of data collection across various agencies at all levels of government, and lost opportunities to improve the quality and consistency of linked data. Subsequent to this, the Chairperson wrote a letter to heads of governments, other senior politicians and government officials, reflecting the concerns of ASAC and other senior members of the community of users of statistics. This letter suggested there be a review of the whole statistical system to reduce duplication, inconsistencies and data gaps. In his response the Treasurer acknowledged the suggestions to improve data collection processes across agencies at all levels of government, supporting the role of the National Statistical Service (NSS) and committing to the ABS' role in the wider statistical community.

The Statistician informed Council that, in addition to the increase in the ABS' "base" funding, the ABS has secured additional funding to cover new work:

- a. the creation of a new index to measure the out-of-pocket living costs experienced by households whose principal source of income is derived from a pension or other government benefit
- b. to assist in the measurement of progress in reforming human service delivery, using performance indicators in COAG National Agreements, specifically in the areas of health, disability, education and housing, and
- c. an increase in Census field-staff pays, to ensure compliance with the new National Employment Standards under the revised workplace relations system.

Data Linking for Statistical Purposes

As requested by the Council at its June 2008 meeting, the ABS updated members on a number of administrative data initiatives involving the ABS. A set of principles for working with administrative data was discussed, which the Council broadly supported. Members did note, however, that some of the language in the principles needed to change to address appropriate management of risks in data linkage work. These risks relate to potential sensitivity of linked data, and best practice governance models are required, covering access control and guidelines for data usage.

Council members noted there is no 'off the shelf' governance model the ABS can recommend, but the draft principles being considered by the Council are a good starting point. Attention should also be given to sanctions which would apply in the case of breaches, a legislative framework, the need for transparency of process, and the role and composition of ethics committees.

Council members discussed an apparently successful model of linked administrative data use in Western Australia, which is being assessed in a number of other jurisdictions. However, the Statistician informed members of both his and Council member, Professor Fiona Stanley's concerns that in picking up this model, other jurisdictions must also give careful attention to the long history and commitment that Western Australia has made to community consultation and governance issues. These are essential elements contributing to the success of this model.

The Council Chairperson thanked the ABS for the work on this initiative, as there is scope for ABS leadership and vision in this work, and it is a priority for the Council.

Innovation Statistics

At the November 2008 Council meeting, members considered a paper which set out the current state of, and challenges for, innovation statistics in Australia. Members comments included:

- a. the importance of statistics which can establish the linkage between innovation and productivity
- b. perception of a lack of use of the innovation data
- c. concerns about timeliness and relevance of innovation data
- d. the need to measure how connected our systems are domestically and internationally, and
- e. the need for an increased focus on a business level framework, rather than the current international framework, and the need to determine what constitutes innovation at that level – including a query whether the international definitions are too simplistic, and therefore overstating the level of innovation.

The Council noted that the advantages of the innovation data come to the fore in longitudinal data sets and data linkage work, which enable analysis to go to the heart of whether innovation contributes to productivity and economic growth. It also enables the geographic dimension of innovation to be analysed.

The ABS' Innovation and Technology statistics strategy has been refined, taking ASAC member comments, other stakeholder comments and new policy initiatives into consideration.

Climate Change Statistics

Council members provided comments on climate change and the implications for statistics. The Council was advised that there is a need to maintain the robustness of existing statistics as climate change initiatives are implemented. There are also a range of emerging priority economic, environmental, social and regional statistics needs, for instance, regular emission statistics to inform markets.

In commenting on an information paper prepared by the ABS, Council members noted:

- a. the challenge in climate change is the transition path taken by societies, economies and the environment. Statistics around transition issues such as compensatory schemes will be important, as well as statistics that measure the impact on segments of the population (ie who the winners and losers are)
- b. the value of spatial disaggregation wherever possible in climate change statistics
- c. the importance of measuring not just the short term impacts of climate change (such as the impact of the emissions trading scheme on prices) but also the longer term physical outcomes of climate change

- d. the importance of climate change statistics to assist agencies develop policies, such as pre-emptive policies on areas vulnerable to climate change
- e. the importance of measuring the financial year (rather than calendar year) impacts of climate change, so that these data can be compared with other ABS statistics and information
- f. the value of satellite accounts to more comprehensively measure climate change impacts, and
- g. work must focus on ensuring statistical systems are robust enough to accurately reflect changes as they flow through the system (for example, that revenues associated with carbon markets are reflected in classifications and therefore statistics; that the CPI is appropriately re-weighted).

The comments from ASAC members regarding climate change statistics are consistent with ABS strategies in this field for addressing information priorities, and these will continue to be pursued in consultation with key stakeholders.

Other Matters

Role of ASAC – the Council acknowledged that over the last twelve months the emphasis has been on resources and government budgetary issues. These issues have forced members to have a hard look at the ABS forward work program, priorities, and the cost and benefits of these priorities. Members agreed that recent events had compelled them to consider priority setting in the short term, but the focus now needs to be on the longer term and that it should be considering the evolution of statistics over a period of ten years.

Indigenous life expectancy statistics – throughout 2008-09, the ABS presented its recent work in this field, sought Council members comments on the new methodology (which is a more direct method of adjusting incomplete Indigenous death registration data), and discussed a publication presenting experimental life tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians for the reference period 2005 – 2007. Council members were generally supportive of the ABS approach when it was presented to them, although they noted the ABS had to work hard to establish the credibility of the new results from the new methodology, given the previous estimates had been in the public arena for so long.

COAG initiatives – the Council discussed recent COAG initiatives, including the ABS' role in supporting the COAG Reform Council statistical needs. A representative from the COAG Reform Council addressed ASAC members at its June 2009 meeting. Council is encouraged by the collaboration between the ABS and the COAG Reform Council on statistics. The combination of workshops, secondments, training and quality advice will enhance the quality of the COAG performance indicators over the longer-term.

Technology and Official statistics – members were advised that the business model previously used by the ABS for technological infrastructure is not sustainable for the future. Discussions have been held with the ABS' international colleagues on the

development of a business case for collaboration on the next generation of statistical infrastructure. Members welcomed the ideas and approaches outlined, and supported the international collaborative approach taken by the Statistician.

NatStats Conference – members commented on the success of the NatStats conference, held in November 2008, noting it was a very good public policy forum. A particular outcome of the event was the Declaration, which was signed by several hundred participants, and was very affirming about the significance of statistics in Australia.

Chapter 3. The Year Ahead – 2009-10



Chapter 3 The Year Ahead – 2009 -10

Following general discussion at the meetings held during 2008-09, members have put forward the following issues as specific Council priorities:

- progress on national environmental accounts
- updated information on the review of industry statistics
- update on COAG initiatives, and
- statistical leadership and further development of the national statistical service, especially in the area of administrative data.

In addition, Council will closely monitor progress on the inclusion of a ‘data needs impact statement’ in each federal government new policy proposal. The statement would ensure that adequate consideration is given to what statistical and other information might be needed to gauge the effectiveness of outcomes resulting from each new policy proposal.

Council will also monitor progress on the expected expansion of the ABS’ ‘statistical clearing house’ function to include household surveys (above an agreed sample size) in addition to business collections conducted by, or on behalf of, APS agencies.

In 2009-10, the Council will continue to advise the Statistician and the Minister on statistical services and priorities on the work program for 2010-11 to 2013-14. Council will also advise the ABS on the directions and priorities it should be considering in the longer term, to enable it to remain relevant as Australia’s national statistical office.

Appendices



Appendix 1

Membership of the Council and attendance at meetings

Membership of Council at 30 June 2009 and Date of Initial Appointment

| Member | Date first appointed |
|---|----------------------|
| Mr Geoff Allen Director, The Allen Consulting Group | 1 March 2007 |
| Mr Brian Pink Australian Statistician (ex officio) | 5 March 2007 |
| Ms Glenys Beauchamp Deputy Secretary Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs | 27 April 2006 |
| Mr Grant Belchamber Economist Australian Council of Trade Unions | 24 July 2008 |
| Dr Peter Crossman Assistant Under Treasurer and Queensland Government Statistician Office of Economic and Statistical Research Queensland Treasury | 11 March 1999 |
| Ms Pam Davoren Deputy Chief Executive Policy Division ACT Chief Minister's Officer | 18 November 2005 |
| Mr Clem Doherty Chairman Like Minded Individuals Pty Ltd | 1 May 1997 |
| Ms Elaine Henry OAM Chief Executive Officer The Smith Family | 15 May 2005 |

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Professor Graeme Hugo University Professorial Research Fellow Professor of Geography, and Director of the National Centre for Social Application of Geographic Information Systems The University of Adelaide | 15 May 2005 |
| Dr James Moody General Manager CSIRO Government and International | 15 May 2005 |
| Mr Tony Pensabene Associate Director Economics and Research Australian Industry Group | 24 July 2008 |
| Mr Andrew Rayner Assistant Director Economic Policy Branch Department of Treasury and Finance Tasmania | 1 June 2008 |
| Mr David Smith Executive Director (Economic) Western Australian Department of Treasury and Finance | 24 January 2005 |
| Mr Tony Stubbin Under Treasurer Northern Territory Treasury | 9 April 2009 |
| Ms Louise Sylvan Commissioner Productivity Commission | 1 March 2005 |
| Mr Peter Verwer Chief Executive Officer Property Council of Australia | 24 July 2008 |
| Dr Lynne Williams Deputy Secretary Economic and Financial Policy Division Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance | 30 October 2007 |
| Mr Ben Wilson Director Competition and Regulation Office of Intergovernmental Relations Cabinet Office South Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet | 12 June 2007 |

Changes in Membership since 30 June 2008

| | |
|------------------|--|
| 24 July 2008 | Appointment of – Mr Grant Belchamber; Mr Tony Pensabene; Mr Peter Verwer. Reappointment of – Mr Clem Doherty; Professor Graeme Hugo; Dr James Moody; Ms Louise Sylvan |
| 18 November 2008 | Reappointment of Ms Pam Davoren |
| 12 December 2008 | Reappointment of Ms Elaine Henry |
| 23 February 2009 | Resignation of Professor Fiona Stanley |
| 11 February 2009 | Resignation of Professor Tony Barnes |
| 9 April 2009 | Appointment of Mr Tony Stubbin |

Meetings of Council 2008–09

| |
|------------------|
| 25 November 2008 |
| 23 April 2009 |
| 30 June 2009 |

Attendance at Meetings

| | | Attendance |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------|
| Chairperson | Mr Geoff Allen | 3 |
| Australian Statistician | Mr Brian Pink | 3 |

State and Territory Representatives

| | | Attendance |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| South Australia | Mr Ben Wilson | 3 |
| Queensland | Dr Peter Crossman | 2 |
| | Mr Antony Skinner | 1(a) |
| New South Wales | Mr Peter Horn | 3(b) |
| Northern Territory | Professor Tony Barnes | 1(c) |
| | Mr Tony Stubbin | 1 |
| Victoria | Mr Vin Martin | 1(d) |
| | Dr Lynne Williams | 1 |
| | Ms Mary Cavar | 1(e) |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Tasmania | Mr Andrew Rayner | 1 |
| Western Australia | Mr Ian Hafekost | 1(f) |
| | Mr Michael Court | 1(g) |
| | Mr David Christmas | 1(h) |
| Australian Capital Territory | Ms Pam Davoren | 2 |
| | Mr Dan Stewart | 1 (i) |
| Other Members | Ms Glenys Beauchamp | 2(j) |
| | Mr Grant Belchamber | 1 |
| | Mr Clem Doherty | 3 |
| | Ms Elaine Henry | 3(k) |
| | Professor Graeme Hugo | 3 |
| | Dr James Moody | 3 |
| | Mr Tony Pensabene | 3 |
| | Professor Fiona Stanley | 0(c) |
| | Ms Louise Sylvan | 2 |
| | Mr Peter Verwer | 2 |

- (a) Attended as a proxy for Dr Peter Crossman at the June 2009 meeting.
- (b) Attended June 2009 meeting as an observer.
- (c) Resigned in February 2009.
- (d) Attended as a proxy for Dr Lynne Williams at the November 2008 meeting.
- (e) Attended as a proxy for Dr Lynne Williams at the June 2009 meeting.
- (f) Attended as a proxy for Mr David Smith at the November 2008 meeting.
- (g) Attended as a proxy for Mr David Smith at the April 2009 meeting.
- (h) Attended as a proxy for Mr David Smith at the June 2009 meeting.
- (i) Attended as a proxy for Ms Pam Davoren at the November 2008 meeting.
- (j) Attended June 2009 meeting as an observer.
- (k) Attended the November 2008 meeting as an observer.

Appendix 2

Agendas for ASAC Meetings

25 November 2008 meeting – Agenda

- 1. Summary record of previous meeting**
Paper: Summary record of the 24 June 2008 meeting
- 2. Chairperson's report**
Verbal report
- 3. Statistician's report**
Paper: Statistician's report
- 4. Update on ABS Base funding Review**
Paper: Update on ABS Base funding Review
- 5. Bringing Forward Members Issues**
Council discussion
- 6. COAG and 2020 Summit Issues**
Verbal report
- 7. ABS New Policy Proposals**
Verbal report
- 8. Strategic use of administrative data**
Paper: Strategic use of administrative data
- 9. Innovation data — what is possible**
Paper: Statistics on Innovation
- 10. Climate Change and Implications for Statistics**
Paper: Climate Change and Implications for Statistics
- 11. Indigenous Life Expectancy**
Paper: Indigenous Life Expectancy

23 April 2009 meeting - Agenda

An extraordinary meeting was held on 23 April 2009 for ASAC to discuss a summary of the results of the 2009 consultation process on the ABS forward work program, and provide advice to the ABS on the priorities for 2009-10.

30 June 2009 Meeting – Agenda

- 1. Summary record of previous meeting**
Paper: Summary Record of 25 November 2008 meeting
- 2. Chairperson's Report**
Verbal report
- 3. Statistician's Report**
Paper: Statistician's report
- 4. Forward Work Program**
Paper: Shape of the ABS Forward Work Program post Budget
- 5. Role of ASAC**
Council discussion
- 6. Bringing Forward Member Issues**
Council discussion
- 7. COAG Reform Council**
Presentation
- 8. Update in the data linkage and administrative data sphere**
Paper: Update in the data linkage and administrative data sphere
- 9. Opportunities to change our business through technological infrastructure**
Paper: Opportunities to change our business through technological infrastructure

Appendix 3

Involvement of ASAC Members in other ABS activities / user groups

| ASAC Member | Committee / Group / Activity |
|------------------------------|---|
| Dr Peter Crossman | State Statistical Forum Development of a Northern Australia Enumeration Strategy for the 2011 Census ABS Website Client Forum Queensland Statistical Table Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group |
| Mr Peter Horn | State Statistical Forum New South Wales Statistical Coordination and User Forum Economic Statistics User Group |
| Professor Tony Barnes (a) | State Statistical Forum (b) Northern Territory Statistical Liaison Committee Northern Territory Statistical Priorities Advisory Committee Population Estimates Technical Workshop |
| Mr Ben Wilson | State Statistical Forum South Australian Government Agencies Statistical Committee |
| Mr Andrew Rayner | State Statistical Forum Tasmanian Statistical Policy Committee Tasmania Statistical Advisory Committee |
| Ms Pam Davoren | State Statistical Forum |
| Prof. Graeme Hugo | Australian Standard Geographical Classification Expert Committee Migrant Statistics Advisory Group Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group |
| Mr David Smith | State Statistical Forum Western Australia Statistical Policy Committee |

(a) Professor Tony Barnes resigned from the Council in February 2009.

(b) replaced by Mr Tony Stubbin from April 2009.

Appendix 4

Operation of ASAC

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

The Chairperson of the Council receives an annual fee, set by the Remuneration Tribunal, and members are reimbursed their travel costs, where applicable. Apart from the Chairperson, no members receive remuneration for serving on the Council. Direct expenditure on ASAC during 2008–09 was \$78,540. These costs are met from the ABS budget.

Secretariat services for ASAC are provided by the ABS. The office of ASAC Secretary is held by the Assistant Statistician, Office of the Statistician. Secretariat support provided by the ABS includes organising and recording meetings, administering membership and the members' web site, and the preparation of the Council's Annual Report. The cost of these services was estimated to be \$81,897 during 2008–09.

Appendix 5

Freedom of Information Statement

Below is a statement, as required by section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, about the structure of ASAC and how members of the public can obtain access to information held by it.

Establishment, organisation and functions

For information regarding the establishment, organisation and function of ASAC see Chapter 1.

Powers

As an advisory body, ASAC has no decision-making or other powers directly affecting members of the public. It does not administer any enactments or schemes.

Arrangements for outside participation

ASAC members are appointed by the Minister responsible for the ABS so that a broad range of views and interests are reflected in the advice that it offers to the Minister and the Australian Statistician. For membership details see Appendix 1.

Persons or bodies outside the Australian Government administration may participate in the Council's policy formulation by making representations to the Minister or the Chairperson on matters of concern to them.

Categories of documents

The ASAC Annual Report, which is tabled in Parliament, is available from all ABS offices. Files are maintained, which contain documents relating to: the administration of the Council; papers discussed at Council meetings; summary records of proceedings of meetings; and correspondence relating to the activities of the Council.

Freedom of information procedures and initial contact points

All inquiries concerning access to documents, including inquiries under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, may be directed on weekdays, between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm, to –

Secretary
Australian Statistics Advisory Council
c/– Australian Bureau of Statistics
Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Telephone 02 6252 5533